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Clinic opens in Al Bu Hasan

Locals dedicate facility to Soldiers from Operation Anaconda Neighborhood

By Pfc. Abel Trevino
Staff writer

On July 15, the local villagers of Al Bu Hasan, 4th Corps Materiel Management Center and 13th Corps Support Command Civil Affairs cut the ribbon celebrating a new medical clinic.

The renovation on the medical clinic, which was sponsored by the 4th CMMC, began in mid-May and took nearly eight weeks to complete. This is the second project the 4th CMMC has sponsored as part of Operation Anaconda Neighborhood.

"We finished with the school in Anwar and I approached the [Civil Affairs office] about a new project," said Capt. John P. Wishart, HHC 4th CMMC commander.

Wishart helped spearhead the sponsorship of the clinic after having lunch with the village sheik, who mentioned the need of a medical clinic for his village, a facility it had never had before.

"The sheik was going out on a limb doing business with the Americans. He needed to do something to benefit his villagers and tribe," Wishart said. "Plus, there's a big conference that sheik has in September and a lot of other sheiks will be there and see the village and clinic. [The clinic] is right beside the road."

The clinic was placed in a highly visible area, so it was necessary for it to be aesthetically pleasing, while remaining functional.

"[The original building] was in pretty bad condition. They expanded the whole thing by at least two-thirds and chipped off all the old plaster by hand," said Wishart.

The end product was proof of what determination and taking

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Photo by Staff Sgt. Ashleyk Brokop

Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, Iraqi Intervention Force "lock and load" their weapons as they begin a field patrol near Al Taji, Iraq, at a location suspected of being a mortar launch site. U.S. Army Reserves supported the IIF patrol July 19.

Security shifting to Iraqi forces

By Linda D. Kozaryn
American Forces
Press Service

U.S. and coalition military officials are working with Iraq's interim government to fashion a military chain of command for the Iraqi forces, according to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld.

The two sides are developing "linkages" at the top, the middle and lower levels of the Iraqi army, national guard, police, border patrol and site protection forces, Rumsfeld told National Public Radio's Juan Williams during a July 16 interview.

"It'll take a little while to get it working smoothly," Rumsfeld said, "but they have a very good relationship and they feel quite good that ... the approach that's being taken by the new government is well understood by our forces and coalition forces. And I feel that they're off to a darn good start."

To date, he said, the U.S.-led coalition has trained about 206,000 Iraqis for the security forces. In some cases they

need more training. In many cases, they need better equipment.

Along with trucks and weapons, Rumsfeld stressed, "they also need this chain of command and the mid-level leadership, the noncommissioned officer leadership and linkages with the coalition's forces." Recruiting, training and equipping new people will be a continual process, he added, noting the NATO has agreed to help train and equip more Iraqi forces.

The United States and Iraq have asked several countries to provide more troops for the security operation in Iraq. These include Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Morocco, Rumsfeld said.

Over the past six months, he said, U.S. and coalition forces have been shifting the weight of the security mission to the Iraqi forces. They began by conducting joint patrols, and then supplementing those with individual Iraqi patrols and counter terrorist activities, with coalition forces in a supporting role.

"As Iraqis get better equipped, as their numbers continue to go up, as

their chain of command becomes more effective," Rumsfeld said, "what we'll see is that they will be taking a larger and larger role, and the coalition forces will be more in a supporting role."

At present, coalition officials are satisfied with the number of coalition troops in Iraq. Military leaders must be "cocked and ready" should the need for troops increase or decrease, Rumsfeld said.

Plans have been made to add troops if required, he said, "by the same token, if we see the effectiveness of the Iraqi security forces increasing and the need for U.S. and coalition forces declining, we are also prepared to begin bringing them home. The circumstances on the ground will dictate what'll happen."

If the security situation deteriorates as Iraq gets closer to elections, he said, the coalition "might have to react to that."

If the situation continues to calm down, as it has over the last few weeks, military officials could consider reducing the size of the coalition forces, he added.

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pride in ownership can produce.

"It was phenomenal. I was very impressed with the quality of workmanship," Wishart said. "And the community, they will be real impressed with it," Wishart said.

The villagers are now able to boast of having a medical clinic to provide assistance to their ill and Soldiers can take pride in providing necessary humanitarian aid to the local nationals.

"[My Soldiers] love it because it is something different for them to see. They work in logistics, so this is a really good thing to see," said Wishart. "I think they enjoy it."

Beyond personal satisfaction to individual Soldiers, the sponsoring units and the post benefit from goodwill projects such as the medical clinic.

"There are several ways units benefit [from these projects]," Wishart said. "Soldiers can see a different aspect of this deployment. Second, they provide a positive benefit for the Iraqi people, a positive impact on the quality of life for them."

Wishart also added that by extending the friendship beyond the borders of the post in ways that demonstrate the military's good intentions, it will paint a positive picture for the locals to put on the American faces here.

The village sheik unveiled a plaque naming the clinic after 13th COSCOM Soldiers who sponsored the project.

The next project the 4th CMMC plans to undertake as part of Operation Anaconda Neighborhood is a water purification plant. The project is still in its inception state, but there are several potential location sites in the surrounding areas.

Definition of a sheik

A sheik is a village or community tribal leader. He is generally the most influential person in a community, and most respected.

The sheik protects the community by looking out for their benefit and attempts to supply them with the necessities of life, such as employment, schools and medical clinics. In return, the community protects him, meaning they generally do not allow anyone to approach the sheik's house without permission and they ward off strangers.

Sheiks are rich. True sheiks are born into the role through heredity and the line is continued much like a monarchy. Leaders like Saddam Hussein appointed other sheiks into the role.

If you lose it, it will burn

By Pfc. Abel Trevino
Staff writer

In a small room in the Provost Marshal Office, tucked way in back, is a little bit of everything piled on tables, under tables, locked in footlockers and in cardboard boxes; these are the lost articles of LSA Anaconda.

Articles are only kept for 30 days.

"After 30 days, we go through everything to verify that nothing is explosive before we burn everything in the burn pit," said a PMO representative.

In an abundance of burnable items, such as checkbooks, identification cards and letters home, the most commonly lost item cannot be burned.

"Dog tags are by far the most common item turned in," the representative said. "Dog tags do not go into the burn pit."

Items are destroyed manually if they cannot be burned. Cellular telephones and other electronics are destroyed via hammer, said the PMO representative.

Other items turned in by responsible personnel in-

clude weapons, spare barrels, Kevlar helmets, individual body armor vests and plates and a variety of other secret and classified items.

"You name it, we get it," the representative said.

Most items are left inside uniforms that were turned in at the laundry point and later turned in by KBR employees.

"KBR is pretty squared away with the organization of [turning in] items," the PMO representative said. "They differentiate between what is junk and valuable and valuable items are sent here."

The employees of the laundry facility have a good reputation for turning in items.

"If you leave it in there, they'll turn it in," the PMO representative said.

Although the PMO stores items for 30 days, they are not responsible for maintaining them, the representative said.

"People need to police up after themselves," said the PMO representative.

The lost and found is open Monday to Friday, from 1 to 6 p.m. Special cases are made for people who have lost items but are not stationed here.



Marines distribute supplies theater-wide

By Pfc. Leah R. Burton
Staff writer

Marines of the 1st Force Service Support Group separate, tag and track all classes of supplies distributed by way of convoy from LSA Anaconda to Al Taqaddam.

The group provides all the combat service support necessary to sustain the I Marine Expeditionary Force and its ground elements as well as its air combat elements.

"We are the main hub for supplies. In addition, we have [Combat Service Support Battalion 1] which is to the east and [Combat Service Support Battalion 7] to the west," said Capt. Tarrell D. Giersch, supply management unit operations.

The supplies are sorted based on the unit identification code of the unit receiving them. After sorting, the loads are tagged with a radio frequency identification tag for tracking purposes.

"At all major camps, there are interrogators, which are like the scanners at the airport. As the tag passes by the interrogator, the machine wakes up the tag and reads the identification information and logs it," Giersch said.

Units that are expecting supplies can log onto the

in-transit visibility server, type in the document number of the shipment they are expecting, and the system will tell them when and where that shipment was last interrogated.

There are constant challenges of supplies getting bottlenecked within the distribution system, inconsistent convoys and distribution patterns, and problems procuring air support. The radio frequency identification tags decrease the inconvenience of these unpredictable issues, as they help both the receiving units and the 1st FSSG stay informed about the whereabouts of any one shipment.

"For us, it's been very successful. It's minimized a lot of bottlenecking in the system. The units gain confidence in the supply channels knowing that they have gear on the way and that it is actually moving," Giersch said. "That benefits us because [the units] don't burden the system with multiple requisitions."

The tracking systems and shipping procedures also informs the 13th Corps Support Command, which equips the 1st FSSG with all its supplies, as to the whether the supplies are getting to the units for which they were intended.

"Anaconda is a throughput for us. We work hand in hand with the COSCOM to get the supplies to our I MEF elements all around the area of operations," Giersch said.

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Demands not hurting recruiting, retention

By Kathleen T. Rhem
American Forces
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The increased demands of the war on terrorism aren't hurting recruiting and retention for America's combat forces, Army and Marine leaders said in Washington D.C. July 15.

In the active Army, retention rates are still at or near 100 percent of the service's goals, Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Richard A. Cody said in an interview with American Forces Press Service and the Pentagon Channel.

Likewise, the Marines expect to meet 100 percent of their re-enlistment goals by the end of this fiscal year, Lt. Gen. Jan C. Huly, that service's deputy commandant for plans policies and operations, said during a separate interview.

The Army also has increased its accessions goal by 30,000 soldiers over the next three years, Cody said, adding that the service is on track to meet recruiting goals for this year.

Cody acknowledged the war on terrorism has stretched the Army's capabilities, and he said service officials are keeping a close eye on both recruiting and retention issues.

"We're going to keep watching it," he said. "We'll provide more benefits (and) bonuses as we can. But quite frankly, it's been the selfless service and the patriotism of great young men and women ... who have raised their right hands and said, 'Send me.'"

Both leaders attributed the ser-

vices' success in recruiting and retention to the high quality of the all-volunteer force.

"I think what we're really experiencing is we're reaping the benefits of the all-volunteer force," Huly said. "The quality young women and men that we recruit, the training that they receive, ... and just what great young Americans they are."

Cody said Soldiers' "warrior ethos" also helps keep the Army's ranks full. "I think it goes back to the leadership investment we've made with our noncommissioned officers," he said. "But it also goes back to an all-volunteer force of young soldiers who joined the Army, many right after 9/11, who fully understand that this country was attacked, fully understand the dangers of this war and the dangers of this world, and have had the courage and the patriotism to step forward and say, 'We'll fight for America, and we'll fight for our freedom.'"

Both leaders also noted the support of ordinary Americans is important for troops to feel like their work has meaning.

"They all need to know that Americans across this great nation absolutely are proud of what they've done," Cody said. "The fact that Time magazine took the American soldier and made it the Person of the Year should tell anyone in uniform how America feels about them."

Huly said Americans' support "makes an awful lot of difference" to troops who are deployed. He said whenever he and other Marine leaders visit troops, the one question

they get asked the most is "Does everybody know what we're doing, and are they still supportive of our efforts?"

"And the answer is always a

favorable and resounding 'Yes,'" Huly said. "And it makes you feel good to be able to say that and to know that the American people are behind you."

Anaconda Times online www.mnf-iraq.com/coalition-news/publications/anaconda.htm

Pvt. Murphy's Law



by Aaron Thacker
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Left Shoulder Diary

1st Medical Brigade

Compiled from
Unit History

The 1st Medical Brigade shoulder sleeve insignia is characterized by a white rectangle arced at the top and bottom with a one-eighth of an inch yellow border, two inches in width and three inches in height. A maroon cross is set in the center bearing a gold rod entwined by a green snake with a red eye.

The maroon and white in the insignia are the colors used by Army Medical Department units, and the gold stands for excellence. The staff of Aesculapius and the maroon cross symbolize the medical arts and allude to the mission of the brigade.

The insignia was approved May 6, 2000.

The 1st Med. Bde. was organized in France in 1917 as the 1st Sanitary Train from units that had been deployed along the Mexican border.

It was assigned to the 1st Infantry Division, the first American unit committed to offensive operations in World War I.

During World War I, the unit evacuated and treated more than 20,000 casualties, including the first Americans wounded in action, the first wounded Germans captured by the Americans, and the first casualties resulting from a German gas attack against American troops.

In 1919, the train returned to the states and in 1921 was reorganized as the 1st Medical Regiment stationed at Carlisle Barracks, Penn.

In 1937, elements from the regiment deployed to Kentucky, where they provided disaster relief following a devastating flood.

In 1943, the regiment was broken up and its headquarters was re-designated as the 1st Medical Group.

In 1944, the group entered the European theater of operations where it provided medical support to the 9th U.S. Army.

In 1945, the group returned to the states and was inactivated at Fort Benning, Ga.

In 1968, the group was activated and attached to the Medical Field Service School, where it was given the mission of training newly activated medical units prior to their deployment to the Republic of Vietnam.

In October 1990, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Med. Group deployed to Saudi Arabia in support of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

The group was re-designated the 1st Medical Brigade June 6, 2000 and elements are now serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"Fortitude and Compassion," is their motto.

Civilian of the Week

Hector D. Ortiz from Tampa, Fla. is the manager of the Sustainer Indoor Theater. Ortiz was born in Caguas, Puerto Rico.

Prior to this deployment, he worked as an Army and Air Force Exchange Service food operations manager at Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City, Okla.

"It's my first deployment, so it's a learning experience," Ortiz said.

He arrived at LSA Anaconda March 3. His responsibilities include all aspects of theater operations as well as coordination and support of command events that require the use of the theater facility.

"The most rewarding part of my job is being able to provide a service to the military," Ortiz said. "I feel fortunate to be here doing what I'm doing. When people walk into the theater and say that it looks better than the ones at home that makes me feel good."

Ortiz volunteered for this deployment.

"I wanted to contribute something to the troops. After talking to a lot of my friends who have deployed, I wanted to come out here and do what I could," he said.

Though Ortiz loves his job, he faces challenges such as receiving supplies for the concession stand and keeping equipment operating properly.

"The most challenging thing is getting the films here on time to meet the schedule, so we can show them to the troops," Ortiz said.

The job and mission maybe fulfilling but he misses his family.

"It's been tough on my wife. She's adjusting



Hector D. Ortiz

slowly. It was a mutual decision. She supported me in our decision, but she worries," Ortiz said and sent this message home to his wife. "I'm happy. I'm having a good time, and I'll see you when I get home."

Ortiz likes it here and feels that the conditions are not as bad as he thought they were going to be.



Staff Sgt. Cohen Young

Maintaining the 'eye in the sky'

Airman First Class Chris Korenaga, 46th Expeditionary Aerial Reconnaissance Squadron crew chief, checks the camera system of a Predator aircraft. The Predator conducts aerial reconnaissance and of the area outside LSA Anaconda. Airman Korenaga is deployed from 757th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

MP dogs train while waiting for new home

By Pfc. Abel Trevino
Staff writer

Construction began this month on new kennels and the facility is going to the dogs or it might be more appropriate to say it is suited for the military policemen's best friend.

After diligently working, the animals of LSA Anaconda's K9 unit will finally have a home to call their own at the end of their shift. Kennels are being built for the canine patrol, part of the Provost Marshal's Office.

"The dogs have been anticipating this since their arrival back in March," said Staff Sgt. David K. Gerlott, kennel master.

Gerlott and his dog, Rex, a highly trained explosive sniffing German Shepard, have been sharing a trailer together for their living space. The problem with this is that creates a mutual dependence on each other, which could be unhealthy for a working relationship.

"You don't want the dogs to become too much of a pet to the handlers," Gerlott said. "The dogs need to separate fun from work."

The kennels, intended to protect the dogs from the environmental elements, also serve to protect the community.

"It will isolate them from the general population," he said.

The addition of this privacy will be beneficial to both man and dog.

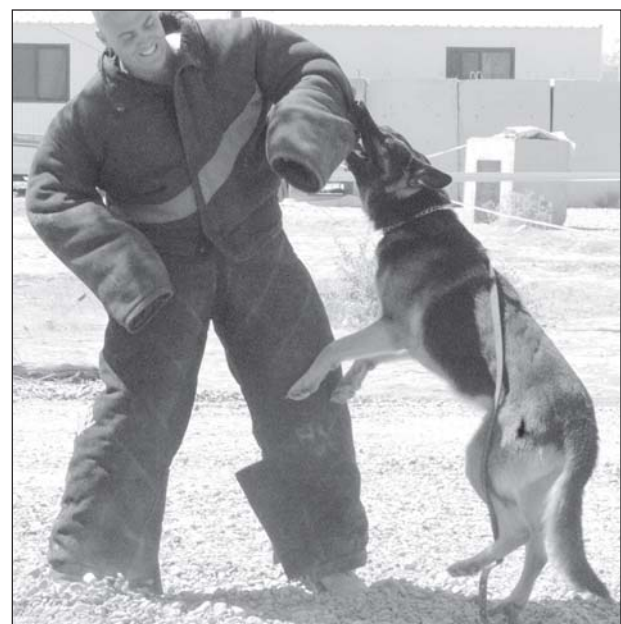
"It gives them a secure area," said Gerlott. "Dog handlers will have somewhere to train dogs without being bothered."

Construction on the kennel will not be completed until late September. Plans for the kennel include several indoor dog runs with air conditioning, as well as an office and kitchen for the canine's human handlers.

"There are going to be two training areas," Gerlott said. "One will be an [obedience] area and one will be [a work area]."

Several fences will be erected to separate the areas and enable greater production from the handlers and their dogs.

"Kennels are going to be an asset for everyone on this installation because the dogs will be able to get their own place for training and their own place to rest," Gerlott said.



Staff Sgt. Robert Partington, 362nd MP Det. in a bite training suit tries to shake Rex off during suspect apprehension training. This exercise teaches the dog to detain suspects through intimidation without causing much physical harm.



Staff Sgt. David K. Gerlott, 362nd Military Police Detachment, takes a break with his canine partner, Rex.



Rex stops the suspect in his tracks by grabbing the perpetrator's pant leg.



Rex apprehends the suspect after being released by his handler, Staff Sgt. David Gerlott.

Photos by Capt. Catherine T. Wilkinson

Miracle Baby inspires Marines to donate blood at Camp Hansen on Okinawa

Thirty-three pints of blood were donated during an Armed Services blood drive July 6, in the name of a 1-pound, 8-ounce premature baby who's receiving care in U.S. Naval Hospital, Okinawa's neonatal intensive care unit.

John C. Gonzalez was born 16 weeks earlier than expected at 3:50 p.m., June 15. Cpl. Rex Gonzalez, his wife Melissa and John's parents, were told by USNH doctors that preemies born at 24 weeks gestation have a 30- to 40-percent chance of survival after delivery.

"He was black and blue and all swollen up," said Gonzalez, training noncommissioned officer, Consolidated Personnel Administration Center, III Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group.

"We took turns holding him in our arms until 11 p.m. At that time, he had a strong heartbeat and (no respiratory problems)," Gonzalez explained.

For babies born this early, multiple blood tests are required each day, according to Air Force Maj. Bobbi J. Hawk, the medical director for USNH neonatology.

The amount of blood withdrawn may total more than one teaspoon a day, a deficit that eventually leads to anemia, a blood condition involving an abnormal reduction in the number of red blood cells.

"The baby will not have the mecha-

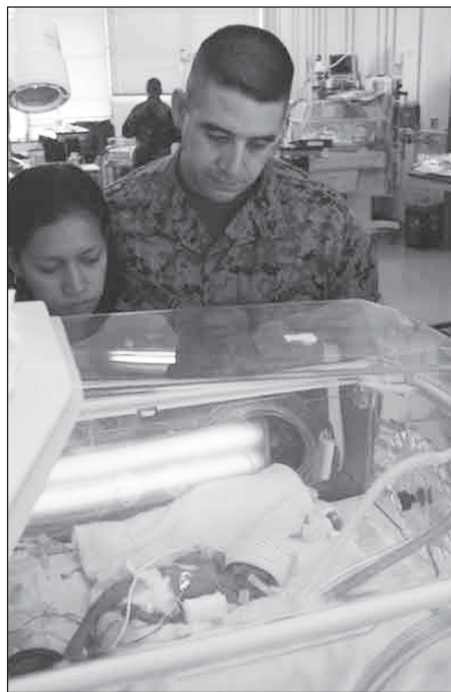


Photo by Pfc. T. J. Kaemmerer

Cpl. Rex Gonzalez and his wife, Melissa, visit their 1-pound, 8-ounce premature son, John C. Gonzalez, in the neonatal intensive care unit July 1. Thirty-three pints of blood were given in John's name during an Armed Services blood drive aboard Camp Hansen, Okinawa July 6.

nism or capability to produce blood and correct the anemia for another two months," Hawk said.

"In the interim, we must replace what we have taken out," added Hawk.

Hawk said donor blood used to support premature babies must be given

less than seven days after it is drawn from an individual's arm to minimize the side effect of the preservative used for blood storage.

When Gonzalez heard about this, he gave one pint of his blood.

While the life sustaining blood cells were flowing from his arm, he asked the representatives from the Armed Services Blood Program if they could hold a blood drive in the name of his premature son.

"He wanted to do the blood drive to help 'the littlest Marine,'" said Tracy Parmer, blood donor recruiter.

"I thought that (phrase) made it personal. How can you say no to that?" said Parmer.

A blood drive announcement was created on 8-by-11 paper showing a picture of John with wires and bandages covering more than half of his body.

The flyer was placed on several buildings and e-mailed to everyone in III MHG.

Many of the Marines who work with Gonzalez, as well as Marines he had never met, wanted to give blood.

"All Marines are suckers for dogs and little kids," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Thomas J. Sukalski, officer in charge, CPAC.

"When I saw the pictures of Cpl. Gonzalez's son, it was definitely a heart check," said Sukalski.

Some Marines set aside personal

fears they had of donating blood.

"I saw the picture of Cpl. Gonzalez's son with the tubes in him," said Lance Cpl. Letitia Simpkins, Marine Corps integrated management systems clerk, 3rd Intelligence Battalion.

"I've never given blood before, but after seeing that photo, it just seemed like an easy thing to do," she said.

The Marine support was a new experience for John's mother, Melissa.

"I'm so glad," said Melissa, as she began to cry. "The Marines have been amazing," she continued before turning her face to hide the tears.

"She starts to cry when she talks about this," her husband said while holding Melissa. "She's new to the Marine Corps family, and she's starting to see that when one of us needs help, Marines are always there."

Blood is needed year-round, but it's critical during the summer months when people are involved in outdoor activities and therefore at a higher risk for injury, according to Parmer.

"This blood drive may be in John's name, but I hope that the Marines here today will continue to donate because there are other people and other babies who will still need blood after this," said Gonzalez. "By all rights, my son should not be here."

Gonzalez said to this day, personnel still walk in to the NICU and say John is a miracle baby.

Marine News Service

Soldiers prepare to compete in marksmanship at the 2004 Olympics

When the Olympic torch lights the flame at the 2004 Games in Athens, eight U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit Soldiers and four other current and retired service members will be there to see it.

Seven shooters and a gunsmith from the Army Marksmanship Unit will march with the U.S. Olympic Team in the Opening Ceremony Aug. 13 at 2 p.m. Athens time.

USA Shooting conducted Olympic selection matches on Fort Benning's Hook Range, Phillips Range and at the Pool International Shooting Complex Sept. 21 to 29, March 17 to 27, and May 20 to June 3. Seven Fort Benning Soldiers won 10 slots on the U.S. Olympic shooting team.

This will be Maj. Michael E. Anti's third Olympics. Anti will compete in the men's three-position free rifle and prone rifle competitions.

"I have been to the Olympics before, so I know what to expect," Anti, an infantry officer from Winterville, N.C., said. "If I stay focused and shoot my match, I will be successful."

Sgt. 1st Class Jason A. Parker will compete for the second time in the Olympics in men's air rifle. The infantryman from Omaha, Neb., finished fifth in the 2000 Olympics, barely missing a medal by seven-tenths of a point.

Parker went on to win the 2002 air rifle world championship — a title he still holds — and an Olympic quota slot, and he set a world record with his gold-medal win at the 2003 Munich World Cup.

Spc. Hattie J. Johnson, from Athol, Idaho, will compete in women's air rifle in Athens. She is a six-

time Idaho and Washington state sport rifle and air rifle champion and the 2002 300-meter sport rifle three-position and prone interservice champion. Johnson joined the Army in 2000 right out of high school, and is a combat medic.

"Match jitters will definitely be the hardest part for me," she said. "I have only competed in a World Cup once, so this, by far, will be my biggest competition ever. To achieve my goal, I need to train hard, stay focused and have confidence."

A first-time Olympian, Johnson is the only female active duty Army shooter on the Olympic team.

This will be the second Olympics for Sgt. 1st Class Daryl L. Szarenski, of Seale, Ala. He will compete in both men's air pistol and free pistol.

The hardest part of the Olympic competition was shooting against the greatest shooters in the world and trying to have an excellent performance," Szarenski said.

Sgt. 1st Class Bret E. Erickson, who lives in Buena Vista, Ga., made both the men's trap and men's double trap teams.

"Without the Army and the Army Marksmanship Unit, I would not be an Olympian," Erickson said. "The Army has given me the opportunity to train while supporting my family."

The third time shooting skeet in the Olympics resulted in a Bronze Medal in 2000 for Sgt. 1st Class James "Todd" Graves, of Cusseta, Ga.

He finished 15th in skeet in the 1996 Olympics. In the 1992 Olympics, he took 11th place in skeet and 29th place in trap.

He was the first shooter to earn Olympic slots on both the skeet and trap teams.

Sgt. 1st Class Shawn C. Duloher, of Lee's Summit, Mo., will compete in skeet in the 2004 Games.

This will be the first Olympics for the infantry Soldier, who won the skeet world championship and an Olympic quota slot in Cairo, Egypt, in 2001.

"The highest level that an athlete can achieve is the Olympics," Duloher said. "Being an Olympian is an honor, knowing that I will represent not only myself, but the country and the flag as well."

Sgt. 1st Class Charles P. Gartland, a USAMU gunsmith, was chosen by USA Shooting to be the official gunsmith for the 2004 Olympic Games.

Also, Staff Sgt. Elizabeth "Libby" Callahan, of the U.S. Army Reserve, made the Olympic team in sport pistol and women's air pistol.

Army Reserve Maj. David Johnson is the U.S. Olympic rifle team coach, and retired Master Sgt. Erich Buljung is the U.S. Olympic pistol team coach.

Both are former U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit members.

Retired Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Lloyd Woodhouse is the U.S. Olympic shotgun team coach.

The Marksmanship Unit trains its Soldiers to win competitions and enhances combat readiness through train-the-trainer clinics, research and development.

The world-class Soldier-athletes of the USAMU also promote the Army and assist recruiters in attracting young Americans to enlist in the Army.

American Forces Press Service

Deployment news: Army to call up 5,600 Individual Ready Reserve Soldiers

The Army plans to order 5,600 Soldier in the Individual Ready Reserve to active duty for possible deployment with the next Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom rotations.

Mailgrams notifying those Soldiers to expect mobilization orders within a week could hit their mailboxes as early as July 6, according to officials who announced the measure in Pentagon press briefing June 30.

Those Soldiers called up will have 30 days from the date the orders were issued to take care of personal business before having to report to a mobilization site, officials said.

The orders call for 18 months of active duty, but that could be extended for a total of 24 months if needed, they said.

The IRR call-up does not impact retired Soldiers, contrary to several civilian media reports on the subject that appeared on television and newspapers June 29 and 30.

"We're dipping into an available manpower pool," said Robert Smiley, principal assistant for Training, Readiness and Mobilization, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. "This is just good personnel management."

The IRR primarily consists of Soldiers who have served their contracted time on active duty or in an Army Reserve Troop Program Unit, but still have a military service obligation to fulfill, said Col. Debra Cook, commander for Human Resources Command — St. Louis, the Reserve's personnel management center.

Every Soldier, enlisted or commissioned, has an eight-year military service obligation when he or she

joins the Army, Cook said. Often, that commitment is divided between active duty or a TPU assignment and the IRR.

"You might have one Soldier sign up for four years on active duty, who then has a four-year IRR commitment, and another Soldier who signs up to serve with a Ready Reserve unit for six years and two years in the IRR — both have IRR commitments to meet their military service obligations," Cook said. "The enlistment contract spells out exactly what the division is between how long they serve on active duty or a Ready Reserve unit and how long in the IRR."

This is not the first time the Army has used the IRR to fill its manpower needs.

During the Gulf War, more than 20,000 IRR Soldiers were mobilized and deployed. Since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the Army has called up more than 2,500 IRR Soldiers — the majority through IRR volunteers, though some have been involuntary call-ups.

The main purpose of this IRR call-up is to fill personnel shortfalls in a number of Army Reserve and National Guard units that have been tagged to deploy overseas as part of the OIF 3 and OEF 6 rotations planned for late fall, Smiley said.

Many of the personnel shortfalls are for Soldiers already assigned to the deploying units who are not deployable due to medical, family or legal issues, he said.

The actual mobilization and deployment requirement is for about 4,400 Soldiers, but personnel officials expect to find some of the IRR Soldiers with similar medical, family and legal issues that may keep them from being deployable.

Historically speaking, the Army needs to mobi-

lize about 13 IRR Soldiers to get 10 deployable Soldiers, said Raymond Robinson, G1 chief of operations.

The called-up IRR Soldiers will spend about 30 days at a mobilization station.

There the IRR Soldiers will be getting checks to see if they are qualified for deployment, getting individual weapons qualification, conducting Common Task Testing and receiving training in a number of warrior tasks that reflect the realities of today's operating environment, including how to recognize an improvised explosive device and reacting to an ambush.

Those who do not pass the readiness muster at the mobilization installation for reasons including anything from medical and legal reasons to physical challenges may be disqualified and sent home, Robinson said.

Those who pass the muster will be sent on to military occupational specialty schools to get refresher training, normally lasting between two to four weeks.

The final stop is joining the deploying unit at least 30 days before deployment for collective training as a unit.

While the specific jobs the called-up Soldiers will fill are varied, Cook said the heaviest requirements include truck drivers, mechanics, logistics personnel and administrative specialists.

"We will not deploy any Soldier who is not trained or ready," said Bernard Oliphant, deputy for the Army Operations Center's Mobilization Division, G3.

As of June 22, the IRR contained slightly more than 111,000 Soldiers.

Army News Service

Marine working dogs fight heat to stay healthy to maintain fight on terrorism

The hanging, drooling tongues of Santo and Rek, two military working dogs, is all the proof needed to show that the dog days of summer are here in Iraq.

Fortunately for dogs assigned to Regimental Combat Team 1, they've got Cpl. Donald R. Paldino and Cpl. Darin Cleveringa.

The two Marines are trained dog handlers who've partnered with the pups for more than two years.

They're the Marines responsible for keeping the dogs' noses cool and moist in the hot, dry climate.

"We're constantly trying to accommodate the dogs as much possible," said Paldino, a 22-year-old military policeman from Oxford, Mass.

Paldino, deployed to Iraq from Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., has been serving with Santo, a 4-year-old Czechoslovakian Shepherd, for two years.

"For some dogs it's okay to have a 103-degree body temperature and for others it's not," explained Cleveringa, a 22-year-old military policeman from Rock Valley, Iowa, who deployed with Rek from Marine Corps Logistics Base, Barstow, Calif.

"So we're constantly watching their body temperature because they can over-heat at any time," Cleveringa said.

Cleveringa had a close call with Rek, a German Shepherd.

During a patrol, Rek's body tem-



Photo by Sgt. Jose E. Guillen

Cpl. Donald R. Paldino, a military policeman attached to 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, gives his partner, Santo, a 4-year-old Czechoslovakian Shepherd, time to stretch his legs at an outpost near Fallujah. Paldino ensures Santo stay cool despite the Iraqi heat, so he's ready for the job of searching for explosives.

perature, reached 104 degrees. He was airlifted to Baghdad for medical attention.

Panting, not wanting to move and heavy breathing are common signs a dog is trying to stay cool, Cleveringa explained. "If they start panting and breathing really fast - they're in trouble and need to be (evacuated)."

Paldino and Cleveringa concocted their own method for keeping the dogs fresh for duty. They hooked up a generator and two fans in their vehicle.

"We actually have two mist-fans that are connected to a water container and a generator that's mounted on top of the Humvee," Cleveringa said. "Those fans really help a lot as long as the water is iced."

The hot weather takes a toll on the dogs and cuts into the time they're effective.

"Being out in the desert during a mission or standing-by for a patrol to kick off burns them out, which only makes them effective for shorter time," Paldino said. "It's really disappointing when we have to wait hours for a mission under the sun because then they can only sniff for about 15 minutes."

Paldino said better equipment like a hard high-back Humvee — wide enough for two kennels — with an air-conditioning unit would help keep

military dogs fresh and more combat effective in Iraq.

For now, they rely on more hands-on methods for cooling.

Ice vests and soaking a dog's belly, legs and head with cool water also helps keep body temperatures down.

With only a handful of veterinarians in the region, Paldino and Cleveringa have found themselves working with corpsman to help ease some of the rigors.

"There just aren't too many vets around, but our docs are helping out where they can," Paldino explained.

"The docs have a tub they fill with water for the dogs," said Cleveringa.

"One day they gave our dogs some IVs to get them fully hydrated," added Cleveringa.

According to Paldino, support for the dogs is pouring in from families and organizations back home.

"Every time we get care packages, it's never for us, it's all for the dogs," Cleveringa said.

"They get more mail than we do," added Cleveringa.

Paldino and Cleveringa also spend a portion of their time sending lessons-learned back to Marine units in the United States who are preparing to deploy with working dogs.

Marine News Service

IMPROVING ON THIS ROTATION



Sgt. 1st Class Larry Gingrich and his team work on the finishing touches of on one of the towers.

By Spc. Amanda Labrum
81st BCT PAO

A bucket loader bulldozer, five Soldiers and 200 man-hours brought about innovative improvements to the South Entry Check Point when Company A, 181st Support Battalion took over from the 82nd Airborne Division in April.

The improvements included replacing a couple of towers at the gates, cleaning up garbage, building additional bunkers, creating a better break room and refurbishing the Iraqi National Guard area.

"We [took physical control of] the gate on April 13 and within three weeks, we had them [the towers] built and put into place," said 2nd Lt. Connie Woodyard, Co. A, 181st Support Bn. "82nd (Airborne Div.) left a great SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) for the gate."

The first project took one boilermaker with more than 20 years experience, two steelworkers and two enthusiastic individuals to get the towers built.

"I've got 20 years of working with steel as a boiler-maker, Sgt. [Richard] Thunder and Spc. [Joshua] Kelley both have experience working with steel. I picked the other two [Sgts. Clifford Crawford and Jason Rose] because of their willingness to help," said Sgt. 1st Class Larry Gingrich.

Gingrich sketched a plan for the towers and Woodyard converted it onto a computer.

The team worked seven to eight hours each night using the Department of Public Works shop when it was closed.

"If we [the tower team] were in a shop [under normal circumstances], it would have taken us two and a-half to three weeks, but we did it in about four days," an impressed Gingrich said. "We worked as a team and had a lot of drive to get it done for the safety of our soldiers."

Sgt. Tyler Hood, a palletized loading system operator, later hauled the new towers into place to be painted, and then bulldozed the existing towers. Other improvements were made to enhance the

ability to protect the South ECP. Gingrich improvised with a piece of track from an M113 troop carrier vehicle to make a speed bump when he could not get cement. The Soldiers also cleaned up garbage and debris, leveled out the gravel, installed more weapons clearing barrels and put up instructional signs in both English and Arabic.

Sgt. 1st Class Jason Barrett built wooden stools for the towers that still allowed the soldiers to see out while seated. He also installed water misters to help them keep cool in the heat. The Soldiers have a new rest area that provides cold drinks, air-conditioning, and a chance to get out of the sun while they take quick breaks.

The ING soldiers' working conditions were also improved during the renovation. The ING break area was renovated and bunkers were built for ING soldiers to use in case of an enemy attack.

"We found a way within our capabilities to fix it," Woodyard said. "We didn't circumvent the system, we just formed relationships and worked through it and successfully improved our ability to protect the South ECP."



One of the two new towers at the South Gate is finished, in place and operational.



Photos by 2nd Lt. Connie Woodyard
Spc. Kelley welds the walls and roof of one of the towers.



Sgt. Tyler Hood, a PLS driver, hauls the towers to the South ECP to be painted.

Movie Schedule

Sustainer Reel Time Theater

Daily Shows: 3 p.m., 6 p.m., and 9 p.m.
(schedule is subject to change)

July 25

3 p.m. Shrek 2
6 p.m. Anchorman
9 p.m. Day After Tomorrow

July 26

3 p.m. Day After Tomorrow
6 p.m. Shrek 2
9 p.m. Raising Helen

July 27

3 p.m. Anchorman
6 p.m. Raising Helen
9 p.m. Shrek 2

July 28

3 p.m. Shrek 2
6 p.m. Anchorman
9 p.m. Raising Helen

July 29

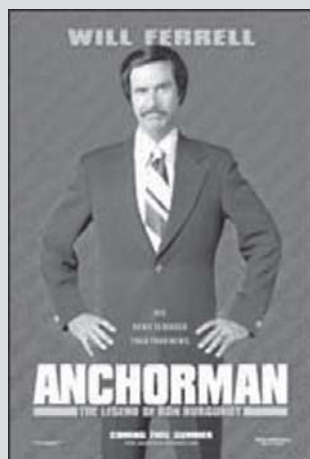
3 p.m. Raising Helen
6 p.m. Day After Tomorrow
9 p.m. Anchorman

July 30

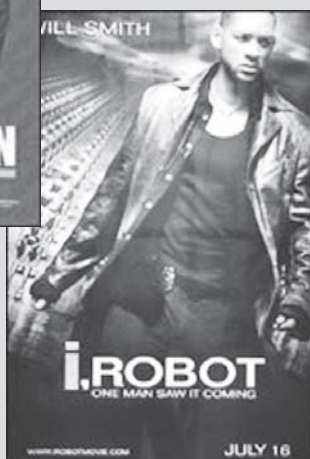
3 p.m. I, Robot
6 p.m. I, Robot
9 p.m. I, Robot

July 31

3 p.m. Harry Potter And The
Prisoner of Azkaban
6 p.m. I, Robot
9:30 p.m. The Chronicles of Riddick



Anchorman



I, Robot

Weekly Religious Schedule

Protestant-Traditional

Sunday 9 a.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)
Sunday 9:30 a.m. 31st Combat Support
Hospital
Sunday 10:30 a.m. Sapper Chapel (bldg. 4091)
Sunday 11 a.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)
Sunday 11 a.m. 185th Aviation Group Chapel

Protestant-Praise and Worship

Sunday 9 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater
Sunday 9:30 a.m. 185th Task Force Tent
Sunday 11 a.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)

Protestant-Gospel

11:30 Sustainer Indoor Theater
7 p.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)

Church of Christ

Sunday 11 a.m. 1/142nd Chapel Tent

Islamic Prayer

Friday 1:30 p.m. Anaconda Chapel Tent

Latter Day Saints

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Anaconda Chapel Tent
Sunday 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Protestant-Contemporary

Sunday 7 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater
Sunday 9 a.m. Tuskegee Chapel
Sunday 5:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Protestant-Liturgical

Saturday 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Lutheran

Sunday 8:30 a.m. Cherokee Chapel (bldg. 4002)
Sunday 2 p.m. 185th Task Force Tent

Roman Catholic Mass

Sunday 8:30 a.m. 185th Task Force Tent
Sunday 10 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater
Sunday 10:30 a.m. Tuskegee Temple
Sunday noon 31st Combat Support Hospital
Monday 9 a.m. PPI Dining Facility
Monday 7 p.m. PPI Dining Facility
Saturday 7 p.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)

Jewish Prayer

Saturday 6:30 p.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)

Christian Orthodox

Sunday 11 a.m. 185th Task Force Tent

Movie Synopsis for July 25 - 31

Anchorman

PG-13, Comedy, 91 min
Will Ferrell, Christina Applegate

Anchorman is set during the 1970s and stars Will Ferrell as Ron Burgundy, San Diego's top-rated news anchorman. While Burgundy is outwardly willing to adjust to the idea of females in the workplace — even outside of secretarial positions — he certainly doesn't want his own job challenged. Keeping that in mind, it's no wonder that the arrival of Veronica Corningstone (Christina Applegate), an aspiring newswoman, is, in Ron's eyes, not the studio's most welcome addition. Not unpredictably, Ron doesn't take the threat lightly, and it isn't long before the rival newscasters are engaged in a very personal battle of the sexes.

I, Robot

PG-13, Science Fiction, 175 min
Will Smith, Chi McBride, Alan Tudyk

In the future presented in the film, humans have become exceedingly dependent on robots in their everyday lives. Robots have become more and more advanced, but each one is preprogrammed to always obey humans and to, under no circumstances, ever harm a human. So, when a scientist turns up dead and a humanoid robot is the main suspect, the world is left to wonder if they are as safe around their electronic servants as previously thought. Will Smith stars as Del Spooner, the robot-hating Chicago cop assigned to the murder investigation. Bridget Moynahan, Bruce Greenwood, James Cromwell, and Chi McBride also star.

The Day After Tomorrow

PG-13, Action, 124 min
Dennis Quaid, Jake Gyllenhaal, Ian Holm

What if we are on the brink of a new Ice Age? This is the question that haunts climatologist Jack Hall. Hall's research indicates that global warming could trigger an abrupt and catastrophic shift in the planet's climate. While Jack warns the White House of the impending climate shift, his 17 year-old son Sam finds himself trapped in New York City where he and some friends have been competing in a high school academic competition. Jack only has time for one warning: stay inside at all costs. As full-scale, massive evacuations to the south begin, Jack heads north to New York City to save Sam.

Raising Helen

PG-13, Comedy Drama, 119min
Kate Hudson, Abigail Breslin, John Corbett

In this comedy from director Garry Marshall, Helen Harris (Kate Hudson) is living the life she always dreamed of. Her career at a top Manhattan modeling agency is on the rise; she spends her days at fashion shows and her nights at the city's hottest clubs. But her carefree lifestyle comes to a screeching halt when Helen soon finds herself responsible for her sister's children — 15-year-old Audrey (Hayden Panettiere), 10-year-old Henry (Spencer Breslin), and 5-year-old Sarah (Abigail Breslin).

No one doubts that Helen is the coolest aunt in New York, but what does this glamour girl know about raising kids?

Married medics share deployment together

by Sgt. Ann Venturato
Assistant editor

Two medics, best friends as well as newlyweds shared a mutual desire to help those in need of their expertise and wound up here.

Specialists Randy Nosal and Jessica Nosal are medical specialists assigned with the Headquarters Support Company, 118th Medical Battalion and members of the Connecticut National Guard.

Both were originally assigned to the 141st Medical Company (Ground Ambulance). And as part of the ground ambulance crew they interacted closely with Soldiers and civilians who entered the Troop Medical Clinic in need of assistance.

"We still get to work together," Randy said. "We have two different schedules but sometimes we end up working the same shift."

Randy is now in the TMC with immunizations and does medical missions at the emergency response center on post. He sees patients as they are triaged for treatment and effectively maneuvers through the process professionally yet with compassion.

"Randy is good at his job and likes helping people, especially here," Jessica said.

Typically Jessica tends to patients in transit to the camp hospital. She monitors their stats and provides assurance to those in distress. She also helps provide medical support by assisting with sick call and medical treatment, as well as doing medical missions at the emergency response center on post.



Photo by Sgt. Ann Venturato

Specialists Jessica and Randy Nosal, medics with the 118th Medical Battalion, work together to help save lives on LSA Anaconda.

Though assigned to different platoons the couple stay close to each other. The two make time after work to go to the gym, play sports, play video games or watch movies together. They appreciate being in the same place when the mortar alarm goes off.

"It is different talking to your spouse versus talking to a friend or someone in your company," said Jessica.

They take pleasure in the little things, like the

time they get to spend together just talking. Although, Jessica matter-of-factly said they maintain a professional relationship while deployed.

The couple was married by a justice of the peace Nov. 28, 2003, just before they were mobilized for deployment. Being here as a married couple was something they said they felt deeply about.

They got deployment notification on Thanksgiving Day, arrived in Kuwait in the beginning of February and were in Iraq a few weeks later.

Jessica wryly smiled and said, "We are honeymooning in Iraq."

"[And] we have saved on our phone bill since we're both deployed here," she laughed. "I love to be able to see him every day or at least every other day."

The couple is planning a bigger wedding after they return home. They also plan on taking a vacation and catching up with their family and friends. Though doubly fortunate to have each other here, their families add to their support system by sending an ample amount of care packages.

Prior to the deployment, Randy was a construction worker and student, while Jessica was a counselor at a middle school.

She was involuntarily activated and Randy volunteered for the mission so he could be by her side in Iraq.

"We just do our jobs everyday and count down the days," said Randy.

Jessica has been in the Connecticut National Guard for five years and Randy has been in the Guard for three and one-half years.

46,000 Soldiers take eArmyU courses online

By Courtney Hickson
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — More than 46,000 Soldiers have been able to continue their education by taking online classes through eArmyU, including many of the Soldiers deployed, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Since its creation in 2000 eArmyU is a part of the Army's e-learning program that allows eligible Soldiers to work toward a college degree or certificate anywhere. eArmyU is specifically for enlisted Soldiers.

Soldiers who have been deployed continue to be able to work on their degrees from Afghanistan and Iraq. Of the 6,984 eArmyU Soldiers deployed in those theaters 2,098 are enrolled in eArmyU classes.

eArmyU is an educational opportunity for enlisted Soldiers to earn degrees online from one of 29 educational institutions. Soldiers can earn certificates, associates, bachelors or masters degrees in 149 degree and certificate programs.

The courses are Web-based and allow Soldiers to take classes at any

time, no matter where their location. In addition Soldiers can get full tuition reimbursement and a laptop to take the classes with, which becomes their own at the end of the program.

As of June 11 there have been 729 degrees conferred and 122,763 course enrollments. These numbers are up from January 2003 when there were more than 30,500 Soldiers taking classes around the world.

The most popular eArmyU degrees are business followed by criminal justice, according to Director of eArmyU Dian Stoskopf.

Currently 72 percent of Soldiers participating are enrolled in associate-level programs, 21.1 percent are signed up for bachelor's programs, 1.7 percent are signed up for master's programs and 5 percent are signed up for certificate programs.

One of the challenges Soldiers face is when they are deployed not knowing what kind of access they will have, said Gloria Kelsey a supervisory educational services specialist at Fort Benning.

"Also finding the time to study, they have long duty days with

training," she said. "Or trying to pull from family time for study time."

"There are little to no out of pocket expenses," Kelsey said.

If a Soldier chooses to he or she can go to a school above semester hour cap, like the University of Maryland and pay the difference.

She also said the eArmyU is extremely beneficial for single parents because they can study at home and do not have to pay for a baby sitter.

There are 16 installations including one in Germany and Korea and Fort Riley and Fort Stewart being the newest installations added.

The current installations are: Ft. Hood, Texas, Ft. Drum, N.Y., Schofield Barracks/Tripler Medical Center, Hawaii, Ft. Campbell, Ky., Ft. Lewis, Wash., Ft. Bragg, N.C., Ft. Bliss, Texas, Ft. Knox, Ky., Ft. Sill, Okla., Ft. Benning, Ga., Ft. Carson, Colo., Ft. Wainwright, Ft. Richardson both from Ala., Heidelberg Military Community, Germany Camp Casey, and in Korea and 2nd Infantry Division (Camps Red Cloud, Page, Howze, Stanley, Greaves and Garry Owens).

With the expansion, Kelsey said it requires more counselors to get involved and know eArmyU, which will allow Soldiers when they transfer to have support from the staff at the new installation.

Soldiers can take their laptops with them if they are transferred and with eArmyU they can continue their educational experience.

First Sgt. Dexter Dean, from Fort Benning, has been in eArmyU for about two years and has six more classes until he completes his associate's degree in criminal justice.

"So far it's been a good experience," he said. "It is a great program; you get a free education and laptop if you do your work," he said.

In order to qualify for a laptop computer, 12 semester hours must be successfully completed; once completed the Soldiers will be able to keep the laptops given to them.

In order to be eligible for the laptop version of the program, a Soldier must have three years of active duty remaining.

If he or she is not interested in owning a laptop, he or she must have one year of service remaining.

570th MRT Soldiers celebrate Christmas in July

By Sgt. Ann Venturato
Assistant editor

Christmas came early for Soldiers with the 570th Movement Regulation Team with a "Christmas in July" celebration July 16 at LSA Anaconda.

The 570th MRT Soldiers got into the Christmas spirit for the afternoon and enjoyed some fun and laughter. The party was a way to gather the Soldiers together to build team spirit and boost their morale.

We don't get to see each other much because of missions and events like this give us a chance to get together every now and then, said Spc. Nicholas Alonzo, who was one of Santa's elves at the party.

A small artificial Christmas tree, balloons and cardboard bells set the holiday spirit.

The Soldiers kicked back and sang Christmas carols, exchanged gag gifts and Christmas stockings and played Kevlar bowling.

The Kevlar used was old, had been

run over and had the signatures of the Soldiers on the Kevlar cover.

The old Kevlar was a fitting gift for the commander since it also had the 570th motto of "Run 'em' Over Regulators" across the band. Kevlar bowling is done by using a Kevlar, preferably unserviceable, as a bowling ball and throwing it to knock down items such as water bottles.

The gag gifts were homemade items that Soldiers exchanged with one another. Sgt. Martin Chacon,

transportation management coordinator with the 570th MRT, got a gag gift of an Iraqi cell phone, which was just a plain white paper cup.

Capt. John Maloney who gave Chacon the gift, made a phone call to make sure the Iraqi cell phone was working. White cotton tube socks passed for Christmas stockings. Inside each stocking was an Iraqi flag, a chemical light, and some peppermint candy canes.

Capt. Donald Blue played the role of Santa with the help of a paper beard.

"It should be a good morale thing for the troops," Blue said.

"The party was to give the Soldiers a feeling that that we're all in it together," said Ames.



Photos by Sgt. Ann Venturato

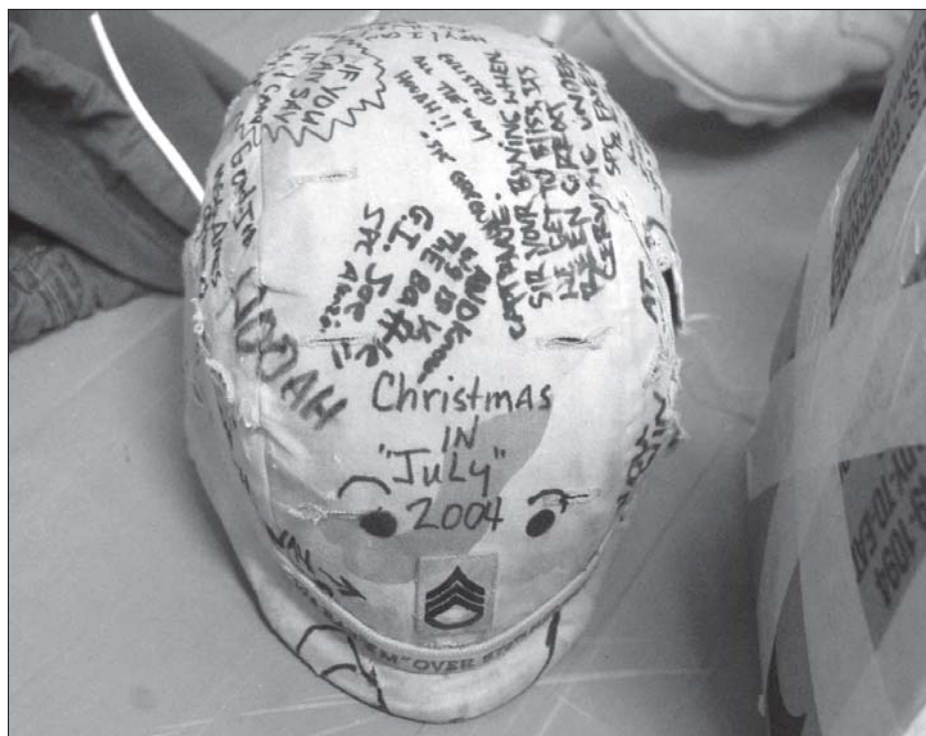
Capt. Donald Blue gifted a painted rock to Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Knox, 49th Movement Control Battalion, at the 570th MRT's Christmas in July party. With the help of a bear and of shredded paper, Blue played the role of Santa for Soldiers at the party July 16.



Spc. Nicholas Alonzo shows off his gag gift to the Soldiers at the 570th MRT's Christmas in July party on July 16.



Capt. Donald Blue, holding the beat up Kevlar in his hands, is ready to bowl down the water bottle pins.



A close up of the Kevlar bowling ball with the Soldiers' signatures.



Sgt. Martin Chacon proudly shows off his new Iraqi cell phone that he was given as a gag gift by Capt. John Maloney during the 570th MRT's Christmas in July party July 16.

Chaplains Column

By Chaplain (Capt.) Kevin M. Doll
HHD 49th Trans BN (MC)

While I was stationed in Hawaii, my wife and I would take our children to the beach, and many times my children would play in the water.

Although I was not in the water with my children, I was constantly watching over them. Many times they would venture out further than they could handle; it was during these times that I became even more watchful. Sometimes I would see one of my children struggling against the waves and I simply watched them. There were others times, when I saw them struggling against the waves, that I would yell out to my children to come closer to the shore. Then there were those times when I would see one of my children further out in the water, struggling against the waves.

As I watched, sometimes I would even see fear on their faces. It was then that I would jump out of my chair and run into the water to grab hold of my child and bring him safely to shore. It was important for their development as beach goers to learn how to play in the water safely; so sometimes I would let them struggle in the water. But there were times when they found themselves in trouble and were in need of immediate help, it was then, I would go rushing to their aid and scooping them into my arms I brought them safely back to shore.

I would imagine there were times when my children found themselves too far out in the water that they became afraid and maybe even thought no one was going to help them. But, what they were unaware of was that even though I was not in the water with them, I was always vigilantly watching over them.

This is exactly what God does with us. When we find ourselves struggling in the oceans of our lives, alone and afraid, thinking that God has completely forsaken us and we find ourselves crying out in despair, then God in His everlasting love swiftly comes out of nowhere to grab hold of us and say to us as he said to Peter "O yea of little faith, why did thou doubt?"

Treatment available to troops for combat stress

By Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - The military member who goes to combat and the one who comes back are never the same person, the Defense Department's director of mental health policy said today.

"No one comes back unchanged," said Army Col. (Dr.) Tom Burke in an interview with the Pentagon Channel and AFPS.

Burke and other DoD health officials try to reach out to those returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan who may be suffering from combat-related mental health problems or post-traumatic stress disorder, he said.

The Army released a first-of-its-kind medical report that showed front-line action had adversely affected the mental health of some service members. Burke, who advises DoD leaders on mental health issues, said combat veterans and their families should watch for changes in behavior that can range from mild depressive and anxiety symptoms to trouble sleeping and nightmares.

"In the majority of the cases, these symptoms are transient; they are common and diminish with time," he said. The service member may have the occasional sleepless night or memories that come back out of nowhere for years, "and that's normal," he added.

Other symptoms to look for, he said, are sad and withdrawn moods, tearfulness, problems sleeping - too much or too little - and problems with appetite, memory loss and concentration. Drug and alcohol abuse also are symptoms of a problem, he added.

But the problems aren't always mild, and the symptoms are not always subtle. "If a person starts talking about hurting themselves, killing themselves, it's important to not panic but to take that kind of talk very seriously and get them to help," Burke said, "even if it involves calling 911."

Burke said that mental problems can go on for years if not treated, and that symptoms of combat-related mental illness don't always happen right

away. "They develop over time," he said.

An Army study published in the the New England Journal of Medicine, July edition, stated that only 6 percent of Soldiers and Marines returning from combat duty experienced mental health problems.

"The number of 6 to 12 percent is not surprising. The experience in the past among POWs," Burke said, "about 50 percent have PTSD; among Vietnam veterans, over the years, about 30 percent; Gulf War I, 10-15 percent."

He said that declining percentage of combat-related mental health concerns might be attributed to the military's approach to getting better mental health services to soldiers before, during and after deployment.

"I would like to believe that part of that is because of the proactive care on the battlefield and the full range of services by the military healthcare system," he said, "and the proactive preventive services that are provided by the combat stress control units that are assigned with the combat units."

Screening now takes place before deployment, preventive service is provided during deployment, followed by more screening during redeployment and follow-up care at treatment facilities.

He said that tougher training and better equipment, along with a more stable rotation schedule "has contributed to the resilience of the service member and their ability to handle the stresses of combat."

Burke said that Defense Department doesn't want to see the soldiers of today live through years of suffering when there's help available now. The military has a number of resources to help those seeking help, he noted, starting with the service member's chain of command. He also encourages service members to talk with comrades or their chaplains.

Service members can get confidential counseling service through the military services' "One Source" program. The 24-hour-a-day service is for service members and their families, and provides quick, professional assistance with problems.

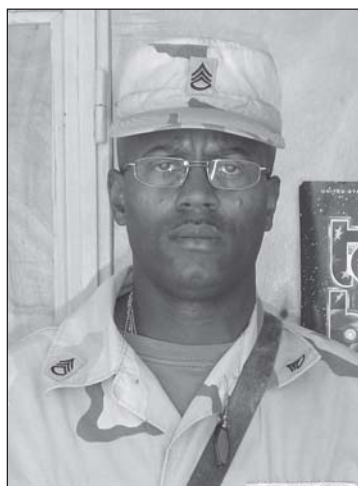
Question of the Week

Do you have a hidden talent?



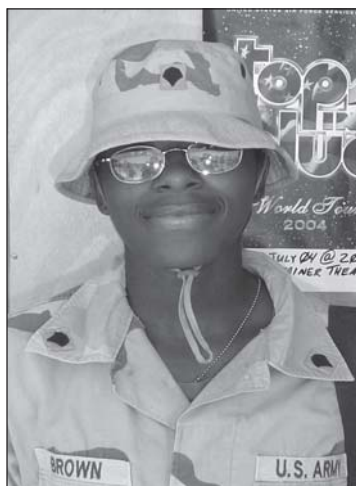
1st Lt. Tyonne Carter
574th Supply Company

"I'm a good communicator and writer."



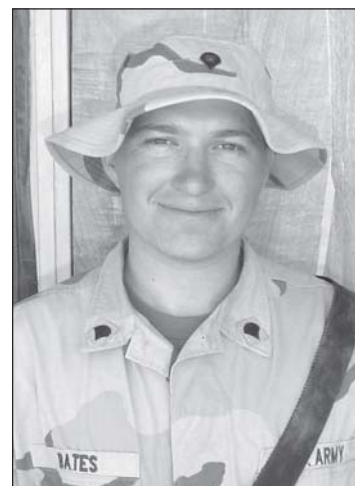
Staff Sgt. Brian Lyon
630th Transportation Company

"I consider myself a well rounded athlete."



Spc. Gail Brown
574th Supply Company

"I'm a singer and dancer."



Spc. Adam Bates
29th Signal Battalion

"I play the piano."



Staff Sgt. Bradrick Graves
124th Cavalry

"I do a lot of music. I play a lot of instruments."

Activated Guardsmen, reservists qualify faster for home loans

By Rudi Williams
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — There has been a dramatic increase in the number of Department of Veterans Affairs home loans to members of the National Guard and reserves in recent years, according to a top VA official.

The number of loans would increase even more if all Guardsmen and reservists knew that being on active duty dramatically reduces the time it takes for them to become eligible for the loans, Keith Pedigo, director of the VA Loan Guaranty Service, said during a recent interview.

He said VA tries to get the word out to all Guardsmen and reservists, but it's difficult to reach all of them because they're spread out across the country.

"I would guess that many of them are not aware of the requirements for a home loan," Pedigo said. "However, I would expect that those who are interested in buying a home would go to the trouble to find out exactly what it takes to use the home-loan benefit."

Normally, Guardsmen and reservists have to serve six years before becoming eligible for a VA home loan, Pedigo noted. But, he said, that requirement changes dramatically when they're called to active duty during wartime.

"They're then subject to the same eligibility requirements as a regular active-duty service member," he said. "During wartime, you only have to serve for 90 days to become eligible for a VA home loan."

Those who are discharged with a service-connected disability with less than 90 days are also eligible, Pedigo noted.

During peacetime, the eligibility requirement is 181 days of continuous active duty with an honorable discharge. Eligibility is also granted to those who are discharged with a service-connected disability with less than 181 days service.

Pedigo noted the VA is making "more and more" loan guarantees for Guardsmen and reservists, and officials expect that number to continue to climb.

"We try to promote this benefit to the reserves and National Guard through various means," he said. Currently, about 3.5 percent of VA-backed loans are made to those who qualified based on National Guard or reserve service, he said.

There are some differences in the basic eligibility requirements between home loans for active-duty and reserve-component troops, Pedigo noted. He said the best way for Guardsmen and

reservists to find out if they qualify for a home loan is to submit an application for a certificate of eligibility to one of the two VA Eligibility Centers. The center in Winston-Salem, N.C., handles states east of the Mississippi River. The Los Angeles center handles states west of the Mississippi.

"They should submit the application along with a copy of their service record," Pedigo said. The certificate of eligibility proves eligibility for the home-loan benefit.

Another difference between the reserve-component and active-duty benefit is in the amount of fees paid — reservists pay a slightly higher fee, he noted.

The fee consists of a certain percentage of the loan amount: 2.75 percent for National Guard and reserve members, 2 percent for others. These percentages can be lowered with down payments of 5 or 10 percent.

The fee doesn't have to come out of the service member's pocket, Pedigo added. It can be included in the loan amount.

"So if you don't have the cash, that's not a problem," he said.

There are also minor changes to the program during wartime. For instance, reserve-component troops are eligible to benefit from the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act, which affords certain financial benefits.

Under the act, active-duty service members can get a reduction in the interest rate on their consumer credit obligations, including mortgages, Pedigo said.

Activated Guardsmen and reservists "can get a stay on an impending foreclosure and have an opportunity to wait until they're discharged in order to get back on their feet financially," he said.

Pedigo said financial institutions are more sympathetic to Guardsmen and reservists during wartime. "We have a very active outreach program with the mortgage-lending community, as well as the real estate profession," he said, noting that about 5,000 mortgage bankers and other financial institutions participate in the VA home-loan program.

VA encourages financial institutions across the country to participate in the home-loan program. "Real estate sales professionals are often

the first point of contact with veterans or (service members) who are interested in buying a home," Pedigo noted. "We want to make sure that the lenders are aware of the numerous aspects of our program. Then they can promote this to the service member or veteran with accurate information."

Pedigo was named director of the VA Loan Guaranty Service in 1987. He said he believes the VA home-loan program has two responsibilities. "One is to make sure that veterans and active-duty service members have the opportunity to use their home-loan benefit," he said. "But also, we consider it to be a serious responsibility for us to make sure that they have an opportunity to stay in that home if they encounter temporary financial difficulty."

VA has large staffs at nine Regional Loan Centers around the country that are actively involved in assisting veterans who have fallen behind on their loan payments, he noted.

"We make an effort to intercede on their behalf with the lending institution to set up repayment plans," Pedigo said. "When there's no way to avoid foreclosure, we continue to work with the veteran and active-duty service member to try to find the least costly way of terminating that loan transaction."

"So once the loan is made to the veteran, we don't consider that our responsibility is ended," he said. "We consider that we have to try to help that veteran stay in the home and assist them in any way we can."

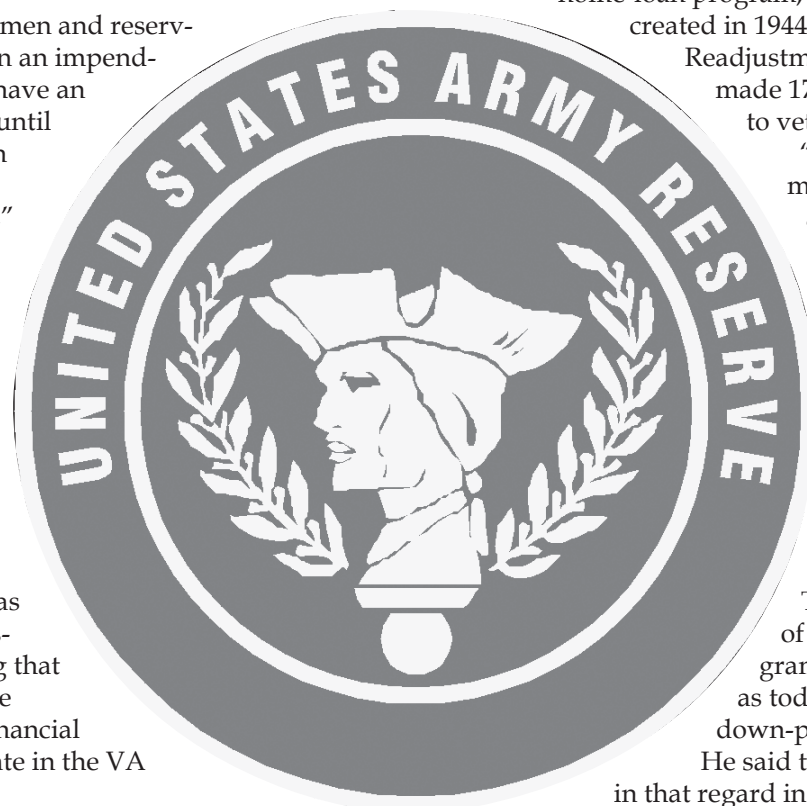
Pedigo said most people aren't aware that VA will come to their rescue when they get into financial trouble. "Everybody who gets a home loan has an expectation that they'll be able to continue making the payments," he said.

"So the thought probably never occurs to them that the VA might be there to help them if they encounter financial difficulty," he continued. "I think many are surprised when they do fall behind in their payments and get a call from one of the VA loan service counselors offering assistance."

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the VA home-loan program, which was created in 1944 Serviceman's Readjustment Act. VA has made 17.7 million loans to veterans.

"We've made mortgage money available to the amount of \$138 billion during that 60-year period," Pedigo said. "The vast majority of those loans have been made without a down payment. The centerpiece of the VA program in 1944 as well as today is the no-down-payment aspect."

He said the VA is unique in that regard in the mortgage industry. "Veterans need to be aware that they don't need the cash on hand that non-veterans might need to buy a home," he added.



Air Force officer cycles way to Olympic trials

By Tech. Sgt. James Brabenec
Air Force Personnel Center
Public Affairs

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — Maj. Eric Obergfell knows the meaning of sacrifice as he rises daily before sunrise to ride his sleek, precision engineered bicycle to work. His days often end after dark with the return ride home as he chases his dream of being one of the best military cyclists.

The major recently qualified as the lone active-duty Air Force member of the U.S. Armed Forces cycling team and competed in the Olympic trials at Redlands, Calif., June 19. At stake for the winner of the race was a berth on the Olympic cycling team.

"I'm happy to have competed at this level and be allowed to follow my dreams," said Obergfell, a contracting assignments officer.

The Olympic trials course measured more than 189 kilometers, with more than 12,000 feet of climbing interspersed throughout the race. The major began as one of 94 cyclists, but was not one of the 35 to finish the race.

"After the winning selection was made the race organizers eliminated the rest of the competitors that were out of contention to win," he said. "Unfortunately, I was not in the winning selection and was disappointed, but I know I gave it my all, that is what I was there to do."

The race completed a full week of distance racing for the major. He competed in the U.S. Elite National Champions race, which also crowned the top military road race champion on June 16. Obergfell managed a fifth-place finish out of nine military riders, and 45th place overall.

"A five-hour race, like this one, requires riders to be smart in how they expend energy and refuel their bodies," he said. "That awareness contributed to my significant improvement from last year and should help me turn in a podium performance next year."

The following day he participated in the time trial portion of the national championship and claimed a sixth-place military finish over the

48-kilometer course.

To excel at this level of competition requires a great deal of training time. Most successful military athletes qualify for and train under the World Class Athlete Program, a Department of Defense-approved program that allows top-notch athletes the opportunity to compete while representing their respective U.S. military departments at prestigious athletic events.

In the case of Obergfell and many other military athletes, duty comes first. Weekends and leave time provide the opportunities to compete, but any training must be managed around work schedules.

"Getting adequate rest and recovery time is probably my biggest challenge," said the major. "In a demanding job as an assignments officer, I have a more than full-time job so there is no rest at work. I usually fit my training in by cycling 44 miles each day to and from work, often leaving home in the dark. However, I couldn't begin to make this all work without the understanding and assistance from the people I work with. They have been awesome during this entire experience."

The major's commitment to go the distance has caught the eye of his co-workers.

"Working as a contracting assignments officer is a time intensive position, because of that it's amazing what Eric has accomplished as an Air Force cyclist," said Lt. Col. Anthony Amadeo, acquisition assignments branch chief. "He's the kind of officer who is 100-percent focused, whether it's on his duties or preparing for his next race. We are fortunate to have him at AFPC."

Now in his 10th year competing in amateur cycling, Obergfell credited his family for helping him remain competitive.

"For working athletes with families like me it is difficult to have the focus to push beyond and suffer the pain it takes to win," he said. "But, I've had exceptional support from my wife, Tina, and our families. My next goal is to win a U.S. military championship race. With their help, I'm ready to do whatever it takes to achieve that."



Photo by Tech. Sgt. James Brabenec

Maj. Eric Obergfell stands with his racing bike in front of the Air Force Personnel Center.



Courtesy photo

Maj. Eric Obergfell takes a corner during a race in Fort Worth, Texas, earlier this year.

**The Fitness Center will be closed
for cleaning every day
1 to 4:30 a.m.**





Photos by Staff Sgt. David E. Gillespie

California-based InSoul's horn player jazzes up their sweltering performance July 13.



Squeezetoy guitarist Brian Dickerson keeps the audience moving with his freestyle blend of classical, rock and reggae.



InSoul delivers old school dance groove.



Through the Lens



North Carolina's Squeezetoy brings the crowd out of their seats with their high-energy performance July 16.